



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

when the other man see her do that he jest hollered, "Make a big fire, an that'll kill her sure." So they made a big fire right quick, and that killed her.

And the man's wife had been dead a long while ; he did n't know it, but she got killed being thrown from a hoss.

Told to Fanny D. Bergen by a young colored girl at Chestertown, Md.

FOLK-TALE OF THE PANSY.—That charming

"little western flower

Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,"

called by maidens "love-in-idleness," but also known as "heart's-ease" and "Johnny-jump-up" (the *Viola tricolor* of botanists), has given rise to many pleasing folk-tales. One used in Germany to illustrate an episode of family life has found its way across the Atlantic, and has been told me in the following manner : My friend first pointed out that the perfect flower consists principally of three parti-colored brilliant petals and two plainer ones, together with a small central pistil partly concealed by the showy corolla, and that beneath the five colored petals there are four green sepals. The family episode herein symbolized concerns a man with his two daughters, his second wife and her two daughters, and deals with the selfishness of the stepmother. Holding the pansy so that the three handsome gold and purple petals are below the two plain ones, the story-teller proceeds thus : —

Once upon a time there lived in the Thuringian forest a family consisting of a man (show the pistil), his two daughters (show the two plain petals), his wife and her two daughters (show the three gaudy petals). The father of the family was of a retiring disposition (show that the pistil is quite hidden by the corolla), while the ladies of the household were more showy and conspicuous ; the stepmother, being proud and selfish, arrayed herself and her own daughters in gorgeous gold and purple gowns (show the three brilliant petals), while she gave her step-children cheaper and simpler garments (show the two plainer petals). And besides this, the lady was so unkind as to secure for herself and her own children a stool apiece for each to sit on (here remove each of the parti-colored petals, and point out that each rests upon a green sepal beneath), whereas her two step-children had but a single stool between them (show that the two plain petals rest upon one green sepal). Remove the corolla and proceed : Having taken away the ladies who overshadowed the head of the family, the latter (the pistil) becomes visible, with his little round head and bright red necktie, and there he sits in silent retirement with his feet in a tub of hot water.

H. Carrington Bolton.

ROPES OF SAND ; ASSES ; AND THE DANAIDES.—The occurrence of a single incident in ancient Egyptian custom, on Greek and Roman monuments, in an Arabian story, and in English folk-lore provokes suspicion that some one idea worth finding out may lie behind the scattered facts. Such an

incident is the weaving of a futile rope, twisted and untwisted in festival custom in Egypt, in Greek and Roman art eaten by an ass, made of sand in Arabic story and in English legend. Further, in more than one ancient monument the futile rope is associated with those futile water-carriers, the Danaides, whose condemnation it was to carry water in sieves; and in Cornwall the spirit who was set to weave ropes of sand had also to empty a lake by the aid of a shell with a hole in it. What do these coincidences mean?

In the hope of gaining further facts I quote, but make no attempt to value, the following rope-makers, ass, and water-carriers: "In the city of Acanthus, towards Libya beyond the Nile, about 120 furlongs from Memphis, there is a perforated pithos,¹ into which they say 360 of the priests carry water every day from the Nile. And the fable of Ocnus is represented near at hand, on the occasion of a certain public festival. One man is twisting a long rope, and many behind him keep untwisting what he has plaited."²

In the painting by Polygnotus at Delphi, Pausanias describes, among other dwellers in Hades, "a man seated; an inscription sets forth that the man is Indolence (*Oknos*). He is represented plaiting a rope, and beside him stands a she-ass furtively eating the rope as fast as he plaits it. They say that this Indolence was an industrious man who had a spendthrift wife, and as fast as he earned money she spent it. Hence people hold that in this picture Polygnotus alluded to the wife of Indolence. I know, too, that when the Ionians see a man toiling at a fruitless task they say he is splicing the cord of Indolence."³

In the mediæval Arabic story, one of the tasks imposed by Pharaoh on Haykar the Sage is to make two ropes of sand. Haykar says: "'Do thou prescribe that they bring me a cord from thy stores, that I twist one like it.' So, when they had done as he bade, Haykar fared forth arrear of the palace and dug two round borings equal to the thickness of the cord; then he collected sand from the river bed and placed it therein, so that, when the sun arose and entered into the cylinder, the sand appeared in the sunlight like unto ropes."⁴

Of Michael Scott, a note to "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" says: "Michael Scott was, once upon a time, much embarrassed by a spirit, for whom he was under the necessity of finding constant employment. Two tasks were accomplished in two nights by the spirit. At length the enchanter conquered this indefatigable demon by employing him in the hopeless and endless task of making ropes out of sea-sand."⁵

A passage in the "Denham Tracts" speaks of Michael Scott as famed

¹ Pithos=a vessel of large size, used for stores, sometimes sunk in the ground as a cellar.

² Diodorus Siculus, i. 97.

³ Pausanias, x. 29. 2. See J. G. Fraser, *Pausanias*, v. 376; *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1897, p. 458; *Journal Hellenic Studies*, vol. xiv. p. 81.

⁴ *Supplemental Nights*, Burton Lib. ed. xii. 24; orig. ed. *Suppl. Nights*, vol. vi. p. 32.

⁵ *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, ed. 1869, note 15.

"for having beat the Devil and his myrmidons by the well-known device of employing them to spin ropes of sand, denying them even the aid of chaff to supply some degree of tenacity."¹

The wild Cornish spirit, Tregeagle, brings life into these somewhat tame accounts of futile industry. The wandering soul of a tyrannical magistrate, Tregeagle was bound to fruitless labor on coast or moor, his toil prevented and his work destroyed by storm and tide. His cries sounded above the roar of winter tempests; his moanings were heard in the soughing of the wind; when the sea lay calm, his low wailing crept along the coast. More than one task was laid upon this tormented soul. On the proposal of a churchman and a lawyer, it was agreed that he should be set to empty a dark tarn on desolate moors, known as Dosmery (or Dozmare) Pool, using a limpet-shell with a hole in it. Driven thence by a terrific storm, Tregeagle, hotly pursued by demons, sought sanctuary in the chapel of Roach Rock. From Roach he was removed by a powerful spell to the sandy shores of the Padstow district, there to make trusses of sand, and ropes of sand with which to bind them.² Again we find him tasked "to make and carry away a truss of sand, bound with a rope of sand, from Gwenvor (the cove at Whitsand Bay), near the Land's End."³

The Cornish pool which Tregeagle had to empty with a perforated shell is said to be the scene of a tradition of making bundles and bands of sand. "A tradition . . . says that on the shores of this lonely mere (Dosmery Pool) the ghosts of bad men are ever employed in binding the sand in bundles with 'beams' (bands) of the same. These ghosts, or some of them, were driven out (they say horsewhipped out) by the parson from Launceston."⁴

I place these roughly gathered facts together in the hope of gaining further instances, especially instances of (1) Ritual use of ropes, or of perforated water-vessels; (2) Futile rope-making in custom or story; (3) Futile water-carrying in custom or story; (4) Asses in connection with any of the above acts, and in connection with (a) water in any form, (b) death and the underworld.

G. M. Godden.

RIDGFIELD, WIMBLEDON, NR. LONDON.

LOCAL MEETINGS AND OTHER NOTICES.

BOSTON BRANCH.—The annual meeting was held at the Charlesgate on Friday, April 22, at 8 p. m., and the election of officers resulted in the following choice: President, Prof. F. W. Putnam; Vice-Presidents, Mr. W. W. Newell, Mr. Frank Russell; Treasurer, Mr. Montague Chamber-

¹ *Denham Tracts*, ii. 116.

² Taken from Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*, 3d ed. pp. 131 ff.

³ Courtney, *Cornish Feasts and Folk-Lore*, p. 73.

⁴ *Ibid.*, quoting *Notes and Queries*, December, 1850.